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ADDRESSES OF MARION BUTLER AND CYRUS THOMPSON

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ADDRESSES
—OF—
Marion Butler,
President,
—AND—
Cyrus Thompson,
Lecturer,
—TO THE—
**NORTH CAROLINA
FARMERS' STATE ALLIANCE,**
—AT—
GREENSBORO, N. C.,
Aug. 8, 9. and 10, 1893,
—AT ITS—
Seventh Annual Session.

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The Address of President Marion Butler, to the North Carolina Farmers' State Alliance at Greensboro, N. C.

BRETHREN—This is an age of organization and co-operation.

That organization was economical and otherwise beneficial for the co-operative advancement of mutual interest was evident a quarter of a century ago. It is more evident to-day. We have reached that point in our civilization, even under a republican form of government, where organization is not only beneficial, but also necessary. This is true with reference to every class of our citizens and to every division of our various industries and professions. To no one does it apply with more force than to the agricultural and industrial classes. Yet they are among the last to avail themselves of the advantage of organization, as well as to learn the absolute necessity thereof.

At various instances of the past, numerous efforts to organize permanently have been made, and, with what results, is a matter of history and is well known. And while the result is well known, yet I hardly think the cause of such failures is generally understood by us.

It is true, that whenever an organization has been started or attempted, that those classes of our citizens who, being organized, have had the advantage of us, being unorganized (and knowing that organization on our part would soon result in increased intelligence, and therefore united action for the protection of our rights and interest,) have used every agency that united brain could devise and combined money could control, to demoralize, defeat and disrupt the organization. The newspapers and politicians have been largely used to make the attack from the outside by misrepresentation and appeals to prejudice, while the Judases in the organization, whose price was thirty pieces of silver (more or less,) have always been found to do the work of spies and traitors on the inside.

But this is not necessarily the cause of failures. The basic cause that makes such agencies successful in my opinion lies deeper. In fact, it is inherent in the rank and file of the majority of the members themselves of such organizations. It is a cause produced by our surroundings supplemented by false teaching. It is a cause that may be termed a cumulative hereditary trait of our social character. I refer to a cause which, for the want of name, I will describe as produced by the want of a sufficient social contact, and a

fair and tolerant exchange of opinions and ideas. I refer to the want of cohesion, to our failure to pool our divergent opinions and agree upon a common line of action that would represent the combined wisdom of all.

Man is a social being. It is not well for a man to be alone, neither is it well for any small number. For instance, for one family circle to be practically isolated from the remainder of the world, especially from other men and families, living under the same conditions, charged with the same duties, and having the same destiny.

When we violate God's great social laws, when we fail to put our hearts next to our neighbors' hearts, when we fail to bring our intellect, in contact with our neighbors, then both soul and the intellect, instead of developing, broadening and elevating, making us more like our Maker, and becoming fit to work out the highest destiny of intellectual christianity, our souls contract and shrivel, our intellects grow weak and narrow. Here is the great trouble, the defect.

The bridge over this great want of social intercourse in rural life, to stimulate intellectual development by the contact of intellect with intellect, to exchange opinions so as to avoid experimental errors in business as well as to get the benefit of a multitude of counsel for future efforts, to learn the lesson of making two blades of grass grow where one grew before, has been the great object of all of the past efforts among the agricultural and industrial classes at organization. And especially is this the great original purpose of the Alliance, and is now the basic idea for its perpetual existence.

So we see that the corner-stones on which the Alliance was founded and is standing today, are : First, social and moral development ; second, intellectual development, followed by co-operation in business efforts and industrial pursuits.

In towns and cities the various business, professional and monopoly organizations have for their original purpose the second of the above objects. There a close or compact population gives the opportunity for social advantages without an organization for that specific purpose. But the organizations of towns and cities have another purpose and mission, though incidental, yet highly important in a republican form of government. What is it ? It is to use the power and influence of their organization in the legislative halls, and at the ballot-box to prevent hostile legislation against the class of citizens which their organization represents. So far, such use of their power is proper and necessary, and it is our duty to use our organization for the same purpose. But prompted by selfishness and greed these organizations go further. They use their power to inaugurate and execute hostile legislation against other classes not organized, or poorly organized and weak. The latter exercise of this power in defiance of right, but too often under the cover of unjust laws, is the snake in our body politic, and the curse of our civilization. This is the frightful game where the big fish eat the smaller fish, and then turn to eat each other. We have seen this game played with growing force and intensity, and for the last few months we have seen it in its most frightful aspect.

None have suffered more from this evil condition, as a rule, than the industrial and agricultural classes—the bone and sinew, the wealth producers of the land. Yet, viewed from the standpoint of numbers, none were, and are today better able, not only to protect themselves, but to force justice to be done to all other classes alike.

That we have failed in this, is little short of crime. A crime not only against those dependent upon us, but against all oppressed and suffering humanity.

But why have we failed ? The basic cause lies in the cumulative hereditary defect of ourselves. The isolated lives we have lived has resulted in each one following his own way, unaided and unguided by the wisdom that comes from the association of ideas. And besides, we have nursed our own opinions, or somebody else's opinions were furnished us, which we thought were our own, until we have grown dogmatic and intolerant of the opinions of others. We have not pooled our intellects and manhood, we have fought single handed and alone had been beaten in detail. Past organizations and lodges of the present organization, the Alliance, have disbanded because every man could not see alike and agree. Our intellects are made different. We were not intended to see alike, we were intended to differ, and in differing to find the truth, or at least a safe line of action between our divergent opinions. All other classes and organizations have learned the use and value of divergent opinions, and have learned the perfection of human wisdom from organization, by acting as a unit on a line of action, that was the combined wisdom of all, though it did not represent the individual opinion of a single member of their organization. They have practiced co-operation themselves, but have preached competition to us, Competition is destructive—it is the devils game. When we learn this lesson, when we overcome this fatal defect in our own organization, and unlearn the false education that has been taught us by selfish and designing monopoly, when we begin to practice co-operation, we will not only be able to protect ourselves, but to advance our mutual interests. Then we will not only be prosperous, but also well nigh invincible.

And though every effort at organization in the past has failed, yet every effort has done good, every effort has to a certain extent overcome the fatal defect and taught us the folly and danger of competition and the value of possibilities of co-operation. The same cause that produced the other organizations produced the Alliance, but the cause is intensified ; the same defect that made the other organizations fail may wreck this organization, but the defect is growing less—is disappearing. We believe that the time has come, that the hour has struck, when the people's organization under the guidance of a Divine Providence will be successful—will become permanent. But let this be as it may, let every reformer feel that it is our duty to press forward—the Lord helps those who help themselves. Let every reformer buckle on his armour with new zeal. The struggle will be great, but the results will be greater. The result will be justice and liberty, or oppression and servitude.

We have so long allowed other classes, organized to control Legislatures, Congresses, and to exercise undue influence on the Exe-

cutives and the courts, and to encroach upon our rights through the form of law, that today we find heartless greed and soulless monopoly entrenched behind unjust laws, and watching the rising tide of discontent from the millions they have oppressed, bled, made poor, and who are well nigh desperate. These organizations understand the significance of this last great uprising of the people. They are preparing for the struggle. Kindred monopolies are organizing into associations of monopolies with one central head. They see that the people are learning to stand together and that they may therefore succeed. They see that the reforms demanded by the people if successful, will force them to discontinue their game of speculation and wholesale preying upon the masses. They are growing arrogant as well as more vigilant and subtle.

And still, at this critical hour, when liberty, justice, and even a republican form of government are hanging in the balance, and it seems that nothing can save the people but a united effort on their part to regain their government and re-establish the principles of Jefferson and Jackson, the hired press and the servile politicians howl that "the Alliance has gone into politics." They would have the people to devote their whole time to making more wheat, corn, cotton and tobacco, while they want you to have confidence in them to run the government, to make money scarcer, to make products cheaper, make debts bigger, and lay a larger tribute and a heavier burden upon the masses for the benefit of the monopolies and the bondholders

As your chief officer, as one who at your command has been carrying your banner and fighting for your principles in the front rank, as one who has tried to serve the organization and his country, who has seen the organization pass through the trying ordeal of a fierce political campaign, and then, though suffering from the conflict, begin to regrow and rebuild. I wish to say to you that the supreme duty of the organization today, in my opinion, is to throw its whole power and influence to correct the evils that have grown up in our government, to re-establish the principles of justice so as to make it possible for the great original purpose of the organization to be carried out to bless and elevate mankind.

I thank God there is one man at least outside of the organization, whose commanding position and ripe years give weight to his words, who has the wisdom to see and the manhood to say that such is the great duty of the Alliance at this hour. I refer to Senator Zebulon B. Vance.

But let me beseech you, in striving to accomplish this high and all important duty, not to make the organization a part of any political party. Let the organization give no help or comfort to any party, except so far as that party identifies itself with our principles and fights for our demands. Political parties are necessary. All political reforms must be gotten through such an agency. But no class of citizens can afford to tie themselves to or belong to any political party. Professional politicians too often control them; and politicians act more from a sense of selfishness and fear than from a sense of justice and right. Therefore let the organization hold itself independent of all political parties, and be ever ready to help

to defeat or to elect a party according to the principles that it holds and acts on. By such independent action only can we purify politics, and be able to preserve our country and our liberties.

The partisan—the political tool—serves his party right or wrong; the highest type of a patriot is a non-partisan; he supports any party that furthers the principles of honest government; he fights any party that serves monopoly and class interest to the detriment of the people; he cares nothing for the name or the label of the party, but whatever party his conscience, enlightened by a correct knowledge of facts shows him he should support for that one election, he supports with all the zeal and ability that his Maker has blessed him with. This I conceive to be the duty of all true Alliancemen with reference to politics.

When the political evils from which we are suffering are corrected, then let the organization give its chief attention to its original purpose. But also remember that it will be ever necessary for us to keep well informed on political questions, and take a keen and active interest in the actions of all political parties, lest the enemy of the people should then corrupt our government again. Our victory so far has come through education. Let us spread reform literature. We have done much, but we can and should do more. Your State Organ should have forty thousand subscribers in this State.

I feel like congratulating the Alliance on its success in political reformation so far. For we have succeeded in two very important points—two points that make genuine reform a certainty in the near future.

First. We have succeeded in getting some of the real issues before the people and are clearly defined.

Second. We have succeeded in getting the whole responsibility on one political party.

The author of the game of shifting responsibility is no less a personage than Satan himself. He commenced the game in the garden of Eden and will continue to try to work it till the end of time. But the politician is now nearing the end of his row. The party now in power must stand by the people and reap its reward, or it must fail to do so and be swept out of existence.

Some true Alliancemen have differed as to methods and party agencies in the past, but the time is near at hand when there will be no excuse or chance for honest men to differ. Let every reformer take fresh hope and courage. Our victory so far has come through education. Let us continue to educate. Let us spread reform literature. We have done much, but we can and should do more. Your State Organ should have forty thousand subscribers in this State. Yes, let us continue to educate, let us continue to organize, build the organization stronger as well as larger. Stand by your guns, press forward with your banner and victory will crown your heroic efforts.

POLK MONUMENT.

Over a year ago the most commanding figure and the most magnetic force in the reform movement was called upon by an unscrupulous

table Providence to lay down the great work he was doing for humanity. No man in the organization has had an equal place in the hearts of the people, and while this is his highest tribute and his proudest monument, yet it is a duty that we owe ourselves more than to him, that we should give such evidence to the remainder of the world of our esteem and affection for him. Let us not delay this matter. Let each Allianceman in North Carolina resolve that before another State Alliance convenes, that a plain but imposing marble shaft shall mark the resting place of L. L. Polk.

RELIEF FUND.

When I recommended the establishment of a relief fund a year ago, it was my idea that the fund should be used as a charity fund only, that is, that it should be used to help such as were in enough distress to make through their lodges' public appeal to the brethren for assistance. It was to get rid of the constant public appeals for aid that the fund was established. But I am led to believe that many have appealed for help from this fund who did not belong to the class intended to be assisted. The result has been, that the fund has proven insufficient, and many calls have not been paid, and some only in part. I recommend that the plan be abolished, unless it can be so perfected that only such as are really needy or in distress will be helped, and that they be helped alike. The latter object might be accomplished by paying appeals once each quarter, and then paying out pro rata the money on hand. How the first object may be secured I am not prepared to say. If you wish to establish a plan of insurance, it should be entirely separate and distinct from the relief plan.

ROTATION COUNTY MEETINGS.

In order that some of the State officers of the Alliance may visit every County Alliance at least once a year, I recommend that the State be divided into a convenient number of districts, and that the County Alliances of each district meet on successive days. By this means every County Alliance could be visited by a State officer at the same quarterly meeting at a small cost from each county. I am sure that the beneficial results would come from such consecutive meetings.

THE AMENDMENTS TO OUR CHARTER.

As you are aware, the last Legislature amended our charter; it first attempted to repeal it. It is my duty to lay before you the nature of the amendments that were passed, and to inform you of the circumstances connected with the action. On the evening of the 15th of February, I received a telegram (just in time to catch the train) saying that a bill had passed the House to repeal the charter of the State Alliance. This was the first notice your chief officer had received of such action, or contemplated action. We were afterwards informed that this action was decided on in a secret political meeting; their purpose carefully kept from the public, and especially from your officers. Mark you, the action

of the House was not only plotted in secret and in the dark, but the bill was then offered, and suddenly rushed through all three readings under a suspension of the rules, without consideration before a committee, under a gag rule that cut off all debate even from the members of the House. This bill, affecting thousands of people as well as a great principle of justice and fair play, was rushed through all its three readings, and was a law as far as the House could make it within the short space of ten minutes from the time it was offered. That the bill would have passed the Senate in the same indecent and unfair haste the next morning has never been questioned or denied. But your State officers (or a part of them) were on hand next morning and demanded a hearing. Only after considerable effort and difficulty could we get a hearing before a committee. Your officers could not learn who asked for such action, or the reason therefor. We were simply pointed to the preamble of the bill which contained two reasons, viz.

First. That there were members of the Alliance who were afraid they were personally liable for the debts (?) of the Alliance.

Second. That there were others who wanted to withdraw their money from the Business Agency Fund.

Your officers did not stop to question the correctness of the first claim nor the equity of the latter, for we realized that we were not before a court of equity and justice, but a body that seemed to have no regard for either. So we at once offered as a substitute for the bill, two amendments to our charter covering in full both of the complaints set out in the bill. This fell like a thunder clap upon the committee, and forced it and the Legislature to show its hidden and real purpose—that was to destroy the organization and to put our Business Agency in the hands of a receiver.

The new charter which the House offered was a further proof of this. It provided for a re-organization to go into effect in July. This would have disorganized the Alliance, put its affairs in the hands of a receiver, and left us six months without an organization. We said the amendments fell like a thunder clap, and so they did, for in the face of the amendments granting all they asked, they dared not pass the bill to repeal the charter. They were in a hole; if they accepted the amendments, they failed to accomplish their purpose—to kill the Alliance; if they refused to accept them, they did more than they intended—they killed themselves.

In this dilemma the Legislature decided that it was not ready to take action. That secret political meeting was called together again, and this time, we are told, it was composed in part of politicians and enemies of the Alliance not members of the Legislature. This meeting, according to their own definition, being secret, and being political, must have been what they call "Gideon's Band." After much caucusing day by day, and night after night, they decided to accept our amendments by adding six more amendments which, for partisan unfairness and discriminating injustice and cowardly meanness, there has never before been a parallel to so strain the statute books of North Carolina.

Under one of these amendments, if you were to increase the salary of my successor from the enormous sum of two hundred dollars

a year to the still more enormous sum of two hundred dollars and one cent, your charter would be forfeited. Or if you were to increase the salary of the Secretary of a County Alliance from four dollars a year to five dollars a year, the effect would be the same.

Under another amendment, if one of your officers fails to perform certain duties in a time, it did not provide that the officer shall be fined, or be liable on his bond, but that the whole charter of the State Alliance shall be forfeited.

Another of these amendments tries to tie up the proceeds of the organization to prevent your executive committee from using its discretion in using the fund to further the interests of the organization.

Another amendment makes it unlawful for any member of the organization to pass a resolution calling upon your representatives to pass, or forbear from passing certain laws, and makes it lawful only for you to discuss such all-absorbing questions as on what time of the moon to plant pepper, etc.

All these amendments are inspired by one purpose and object, to get a pretext to rob you of your charter, and to place the business of the organization in the hands of a receiver, or rather of a political party.

And any other corporation or organization that gets in the way of the machine is liable to be treated in the same manner. In the same way, and with equally as much justice, a law might be passed to make it unlawful for any city board of trade to pass a petition to Congress. Or a charter of a railway company might be amended, by making it liable to forfeit its charter if the salary of a brakeman or of the President of the road is increased even the slightest amount. Or if the stockholders of the road at any of their meetings discuss anything but rates and fares, or if any conductor should fail to bring any train into a station on time, then the charter of the whole corporation to be forfeited.

The dark days of reconstruction, the "mongrel" Legislatures, and the "kangaroo konvenshun" of '69 show nothing that is a parallel in such discriminating unfairness and partisan injustice.

Now, in conclusion, brethren, while these amendments are unjust, they are law. So let us urge upon you as law-abiding citizens, to observe and obey them, while you must, for in doing so you will show great patience, strength and forbearance. But if you allow another election to pass without using all honorable and lawful means in your power to blot them off the statute books, then we will be wanting in manhood, and unworthy of justice. We could not expect any better from a body of men, the majority of whom hold their positions by dishonest means, by wholesale bribery and fraud. The rank and file of the party, which that Legislature claims to represent, does not approve of its actions. The rank and file of all parties are honest and fair minded, beyond the lines of partisan prejudice. Therefore allow me, as my last official utterance to you, to call upon every Allianceman in North Carolina, and to appeal to every fair-minded, honest man out of the organization, to use every honorable effort of talent and means and influence to elect a Legislature to not only wipe out this disgrace from our

statute books, but to also to wipe the force-bill election law from our statute books, which makes it possible for a corrupt machine in a party to defeat the will of a majority of the people. If our government stands, and we retain our liberties, the will of the majority must triumph over the dictations of a dangerous, autocratic, domineering and irresponsible minority among us. This must be done to keep pure even our churches, and to prevent the livery of heaven from being used as a cloak for the agency of Satan. This must be done before the Alliance can proceed with its great original purpose, to elevate mankind mentally, socially, morally and financially.

The aims of the Alliance are high, and its purposes are noble, but justice must reign under an honest government controlled by the will of a majority, to make its noble mission possible. To this immediate work I commend and urge you, and to your assistance should come all honest men from everywhere.

The Address of Cyrus Thompson State Lecturer of N. C. Farmers' State Alliance at Greensboro, N. C.

Lack of funds for the use of this department, in consequence of recent amendments to our charter, has made it impossible for me to take the field as Lecturer. But as representing the Business Agency, by direction of the Executive Committee, I have addressed the public on some seventy occasions, in twenty-four counties, since the 13th of April, 1893. Brother J. T. B. Hoover has represented the Agency in a number of other counties, and has done noble work in upbuilding the Order. The brethren everywhere have treated us both with unbounded kindness and rendered us material assistance in the work.

In the face of all the Order has had to contend against, it is now rapidly improving both in spirit and in numbers. Although sensible men of whatever party affiliation see and know that the charge so industriously repeated by our enemies, that "the Alliance left its first principles and became partisan," is utterly unfounded in fact, yet the charge continues to be made, and it will continue to be made by any and every political party in turn on losing the support of a majority of Alliancemen. If the Order were partisan, however, it would not be terrible in the eyes of partisans, and the charge of partisanship would cease. It has never been brought by a party benefited by the support of a majority of the Order. It is only when the party ox is gored, through "lack of confidence," by our non-partisan bull that the ox bellows out partisanship. If the bull gored some other ox and helped this one, in the eye of this ox such action would be thoroughly non-partisan.

The principles of the Alliance, as I understand and teach them, are the same to-day as in the beginning. Its first declaration of purposes was,

"To labor to educate the agricultural classes in the science of economical government in a strictly non-partisan spirit." The mission of the Order is to educate, because all individual and national evils originate in ignorance; to educate "in the science of economical government," which is politics, because the evils we complain of are political, fastened upon us by political action grounded in political ignorance, and to be gotten rid of only by political action based upon political wisdom; to educate "in a strictly non-partisan spirit," because political teaching and study in a partisan spirit tends blindly to secure the supremacy of a party regardless of the effect upon political truth and the popular welfare. And this exhibition of party spirit is equally ruinous under whatever name. It is the true Allianceman's purpose to serve the ends of no political party, whether Democratic, Republican or People's, but to make every political party serve the interests of every legitimate industry; and this can be done only as we educate men to be wise and patriotic rather than partisan; to look upon all parties as faithless unless forced, and to be rendered faithful and servants at all only under the constant eye of a master ready to punish.

Along the line of such education we have done much, and bitter experience of progressive ruin keeps ceaseless school among the blind devotees of all parties. The increasing burden of oppression is the best eye-opener. The most irresistible of all teachers, the one seen and heard by the weaker in every avocation, is hard times, the God of Liberty's loudest appeal to men to be free. The people are more nearly non-partisan to-day than ever before.

From the beginning the Alliance has been a political organization and, if true to its first principles, it will always continue to be. There could be no excuse for its existence otherwise. But it was not partisan in the beginning, nor is it partisan now. If it were said to be partisan in 1892, for as good reason it was partisan in 1888 and in 1890, in which years the charge of partisanship was not made. It endeavors to teach, but in no other way does it interfere with one's political notions. It desires unity as essential, but it prefers charity in all things as being the only method of securing the unity desired. All teaching is done in love, and to fulfill our mission we must individually exercise this blessed spirit not only toward the Agricultural classes, but toward all classes who suffer with us a common oppression.



